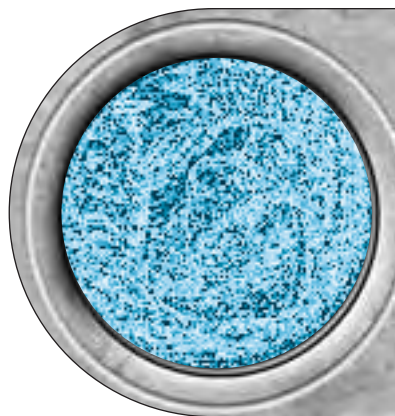




END-TIME: DISAPPOINTMENT

Where Are You, Lord?

February 5, 2011

1

PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Exodus 25:8 (NIV) • “Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.”

Hebrews 8:5 (NIV) • “They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: ‘See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’”

John 14:6 (KJV) • “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

Daniel 8:14 (KJV) • “And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

Numbers 14:34 (KJV) • “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year.”

Daniel 9:25 (KJV) • “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks.”

The Great Controversy, p. 424 • “The mistake had not been in the reckoning of the prophetic

periods, but in the event to take place at the end of the 2300 days. Through this error the believers had suffered disappointment, yet all that was foretold by the prophecy, and all that they had any Scripture warrant to expect, had been accomplished. At the very time when they were lamenting the failure of their hopes, the event had taken place which was foretold by the message, and which must be fulfilled before the Lord could appear to give reward to His servants.”

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) • “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “DISAPPOINTMENT”

This week's lesson deals with two inseparable subjects, the Great Disappointment and the Heavenly Sanctuary. Both reflect issues that gave special formation to what emerged as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Both features, moreover, are related to October 22, 1844 in special ways and reach across the gap of the centuries to us in equally significant ways.

The nineteenth-century events surrounding our subject are fascinating. Picture God calling a New England farmer and former agnostic, William Miller, to warn a self-satisfied people about the Judgment and Jesus' Second Coming!

Gaining from 50,000 to 100,000 followers who came from all walks of life, he preached his solemn message from 1831 to 1844. In the process, he gained many critics, who rejected his message and labeled him and his followers deluded fanatics. Unmoved, the Millerites pressed on, sure that Jesus would return to earth on October 22 and institute His heavenly kingdom.

Imagine their keen disappointment when October 23 dawned and Jesus had not come! But imagine, also, their joy when God revealed through vision and Scripture the real event that had occurred! Imagine what blessings they experienced as they understood the far-reaching implications of the sanctuary service! For them, it proved that a personal, loving God was undeniably in control of a movement that was destined to succeed—whatever assaults men or demons would launch against it!

As spiritual descendants of the Advent pioneers, we likewise find this week's lesson relevant and comforting. Just as He comforted and energized them amidst their daunting circumstances, Jesus comforts and energizes us in our individual challenges and disappointments of twenty-first century life. He uses the sanctuary service to show us that He is as much in control of our lives as He is the movement of which we are a part. Using us, He reaches out to include as many as possible in this movement that is soon to triumph in His second coming.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH "DISAPPOINTMENT"

As a result of this lesson, we would like the students to be able to:

1. Understand the reason for the Great Disappointment.
2. Discover the sanctuary's role in alleviating the Disappointment and our own problems.
3. Know that a loving God is leading His people to inevitable victory.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) four copies of student

script provided with Beginning Activity A and four students to play the parts of a nineteenth-century disappointment scene; period costume is optional ; (Activity B) four copies of student script provided with Beginning Activity B and the previous four students to enact the script; period costume is optional. (Distribute scripts to students beforehand, so that they will be prepared to do their best on Sabbath.)

Connecting • Pictures of Advent pioneers, Bibles, student lessons.

Applying • Bibles.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN BEFORE

Allow 10 minutes as students are arriving to:

1. Ask them which verse they chose to learn from Wednesday's portion of their lesson. Give them opportunity to say their verses from memory.
2. Give the students opportunity to "quote" themselves, using what they wrote in the Monday portion of their lesson. Be sure to debrief them about any quotations that might not reflect the Christian life accurately. However, quotations of this nature do not occur in every lesson.
3. Review responses that they and others made to the scenario that was posed on Sunday. Discuss the variety of responses, ending with thoughts from last week's What's to Be Said About . . . in the teacher lesson.

If you have a very large group, have adults available to process this section with smaller groups of students.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for *Adventist*

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word. At some point you should distribute or call their attention to their student lesson for this week.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • You will need eight-by-ten pictures, portraits, or crayon drawings of a few Adventist pioneers, with their names beneath the illustrations; a boy and two girls; a table and three chairs.

Get set • Use pictures of Adventist pioneers as backdrops on a wall. Set up table and chairs, as in a room. Have girls in room talking with each other, while boy remains outside, prior to knocking on the “door.”

Go • Have students act out the following skit: **“From Disappointment to Happiness” (Part One).**

Mary (sobbing): Clara, I just don’t know why He hasn’t come . . .

Clara (rather crossly): Especially after He promised He would! Mother and Father are really upset. Everybody’s making fun of us and telling us there isn’t a heaven, after all. Some even say there’s no God!

Mary (bursting into fresh tears): But there is! There is a God—and a heaven, too! He’s been so good to me, you, and all the others since we believed Elder Miller’s message of Jesus’ coming.

Clara (softening): Yes, you’re right. Father stopped drinking after he attended the meetings,

even though he’d been trying to stop by himself for years and years. And Mother became so much nicer, too.

Mary (brightening): And God made church and the Bible seem enjoyable. The meetings were like heaven to me, and I couldn’t get enough of them! When I read about Jesus, He seemed as real as you are—and as close to me as you are now!

Clara: Yes, I felt the same way. Only it’s so difficult now that we’re still here on Earth and not in heaven with Him. So difficult now that Father’s wanting to go to the taverns again and Mother’s getting crosser and crosser by the minute. (Sighs)

Mary: It is difficult, Clara. But we mustn’t give up. We must pray for them. I just know God will hear our prayers. He’ll help us and tell us why Jesus hasn’t come!

(Characters are to “freeze” while the teacher quickly debriefs the class).

Debriefing • Ask: Are religion, God, and the Bible only for adults? What do Clara and Mary show about the children and youth who were waiting for Jesus to come in 1844? (They were just as disappointed as the adults.) **How does Mary propose dealing with their disappointment? Is this an effective strategy?**

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The above materials and characters are also to be used for this activity.

Get set • The situation described above forms the foundation for the activity in this section.

Go • After the Debriefing, the characters unfreeze to present the following: **“From Disappointment to Happiness” (Part Two).**

An excited knocking is heard at the door, startling Mary.

Mary: Whoever can that be?

Clara (crossing to the door): Whoever’s there sure wants to get in quickly. (Opening the door) Oh, it’s you, Peter!

Peter: Yes! And I’ve got good news!

Clara: We can really use some of that

around here today.

Mary (excitedly): What's the news, Peter.

Peter (almost in one breath): I heard my father talking with one of the Millerite ministers. The minister said that Jesus did come, after all.

Mary and Clara: He did?

Peter: Yes, but not to the sanctuary we've been preaching about. The minister said God showed Brother Hiram Edson a vision about it Wednesday morning. Jesus didn't come to cleanse this earth with the fires of His second coming.

Clara: Where did He go then?

Peter: He went to the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to cleanse it of our sins. And after He's finished that, He'll come to take us home and end sin!

Mary (excitedly): I just knew it! There had to be a reason why He didn't come!

Clara (quietly): But Peter, all kinds of strange things have been happening lately. How do we know this vision is true?

Peter (chuckling): That's why I've brought my Bible. The minister supported everything from it. And now, if you'll sit down, so will I!

(End of Skit)

Debriefing • Ask: Does God care when we are disappointed? Why or why not?

Although God isn't a character in the skit, are there ways in which He is involved in it?

What should we do when we are troubled?

(We can confide anything to God; we can trust that He understands more about what we are going through than we do ourselves.)

When troubled, should we confide our troubles to anyone besides God? (There are times when God uses humans to help and comfort one another. But because it can hurt and discourage some people if we tell our problems to them, we need to tell someone who is a strong and trustworthy Christian. Remember, though, that God is the only truly safe place to take our concerns and troubles.)

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

"Growing in Courage and Might. A man by the name of Mallory led an expedition to try to conquer Mt. Everest in the 1920s. The first expedition failed, as did the second. Then with a team of the best quality and ability, Mallory made a third assault. But in spite of careful planning and extensive safety precautions, disaster struck. An avalanche hit and Mallory and most of his party were killed. When the few who did survive returned to England, they held a glorious banquet saluting the great people of Mallory's final expedition. As the leader of the survivors stood to acknowledge the applause, he looked around the hall at the framed pictures of Mallory and his comrades who had died. Then he turned his back to the crowds to face a huge picture of Mt. Everest which stood looming like a silent, unconquerable giant behind the banquet table. With tears streaming down his face, he addressed the mountain on behalf of Mallory and his dead friends. 'I speak to you, Mt. Everest, in the name of all brave men living and those yet unborn. Mt. Everest, you defeated us once; you defeated us; you defeated us three times. But, Mt. Everest, we shall someday defeat you, because you can't get any bigger and we can.'" —

James S. Hewitt, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1988), p. 131.

Debriefing • Ask: How many times and in what ways have Seventh-day Adventists been disappointed regarding Jesus' second coming? (at least once) **Why did Mallory's expedition fail to reach Mt. Everest's summit?** (An avalanche prevented them.) **Why have Seventh-day Adventists failed to realize Jesus' return?** (Possible answers that may arise: Worldliness—we've become too comfortable in this world, etc. Sinfulness. Weakening commitment.) **How can we "get bigger" to reach this goal?** (Focusing on Jesus as our Savior, Friend, and Enabler. Prayer. Bible Study. Reformation. Confession of our sins to God and faults to others.)

Say: Today we are focusing on the Great Disappointment of 1844 and other disappointments in our lives. Since we are of

individual importance to Him, God helps us with our problems, since He knows the best solution for them.

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Present the following ideas in your own words:

Have the students find and read **Exodus 25:8**. **Ask:** Why did God want to dwell among His people and have a sanctuary built for Him? (He wanted to be close to them, letting them know how much He cared for them. He wanted them to know what He was really like.)

Say: God wanted His people to know that although they were sinful, He had a wonderful system for getting rid of their sins and helping them be like Him.

Say: Let's find and read **Hebrews 8:5**. **Ask:** Why was God so insistent that Moses build the earthly sanctuary exactly like the pattern of the heavenly sanctuary? (The important features of forgiveness and salvation were to be portrayed in the earthly sanctuary. God's holiness and character were also being shown.)

Say: God did not want anyone to misunderstand the sanctuary service. He wanted us to understand His holy character that Satan wanted to misrepresent. And He wanted us to understand His complete plan of salvation.

Ask: Generally, what was the sanctuary like?

Say: Exodus chapters 25 to 31 gives the details of the sanctuary and its services.

In your own words share the following ideas:

There were three parts: the courtyard in which the offerings for sin were sacrificed; the Holy Place in which was furniture representing

God's truth, providing power, and interest in our prayers; and the Most Holy Place, where God's presence resided, and in which only the high priest entered once a year to make atonement for the people's sins. This atoning work was called the cleansing of the sanctuary, for not only were the people's sins forgiven, but the sanctuary was also cleansed of its record of their sins for that year.

According to **Daniel 8:14**, the sanctuary was to be cleansed after 2,300 days. Prophetically, this period represented 2,300 years. **Ask:** From which period were these years to be reckoned? **Say:** According to **Daniel 9:25**, the period was to start "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" (KJV). Historically, this occurred in 457 B.C.

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's portion of the lesson.

Ask: How does young Ellen Harmon's experience show two types of disappointment? (She was disappointed when a stone-throwing incident disfigured her face and when Jesus hadn't returned on October 22, 1844, as she and other Millerites had hoped.)

Ask: Can you think of a time when you were either disappointed with something about yourself or something about God? How did you react to the disappointment? Ask for examples to be shared. Did your reaction help your disappointment or hinder it? Allow for student responses.

Say: Some disappointments are really "blessings in disguise." Ellen's injury helped her to seek Jesus as her Friend and Savior and to place outer beauty in its proper light. It also prepared her for a lifetime of service. However, there are some disappointments that we may never understand on earth, but we can trust a loving God to use them for

our benefit and to help us bear them. In heaven, He will graciously show us why He allowed them to enter our lives.

Ask: Why were the early Advent believers disappointed? (They misunderstood what the sanctuary meant. They felt that the earth was to be cleansed by fire at Christ's coming when it was really the heavenly sanctuary to be cleansed of sin at that time.) **We can learn a lot from many of the early Adventists about ways to handle disappointments. They refused to allow worldly pressure to destroy their love for Jesus and their faith in Him. They shared their disappointment with one another and studied the Bible to find ways to understand it and deal with it. As a result, they were open to receive the healing that God gave them through vision and the Bible.**

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Pose the following scenario:

When his parents joined the church after an evangelistic series, Roger became a Seventh-day Adventist, too. Back then, he was excited about the Lord and the church. With all the signs announcing Jesus' return, he was sure that he would see Him soon and lived for the day. That was three years ago, and now Roger wonders if Jesus is ever going to come. He says that evidently God does not know what "soon" really means, and Roger has stopped coming to church. How would you try to help Roger?

Ask: What does a discouraged person need most? (understanding, compassion, truth, patience, encouragement, forgiveness) **Ask:** How can you show Roger these characteristics? Allow student responses.

Say: From the verses in Wednesday's section of the student lesson, select texts that show how God meets the needs of discouraged people. Allow for student responses. **Say:** Which of these texts appeal to you most, and why? Allow for student responses.

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY:

Have students divide into groups to discover how certain biblical characters dealt with disappointment. Place the following questions and references on a chalkboard or flipchart.

Say: You are to select a character, using the supplied text to answer the question.

1. How did Abraham and Sarah react when God did not provide them with a son? **Genesis 16:1-4.** (They decided to have a son through Abraham's marrying Hagar.)
2. How did Moses show his disappointment with the Israelites' constant complaining in the wilderness? **Numbers 20:10, 11.** (He insulted them and struck a rock twice instead of speaking to it.)
3. How did the Israelites react to the report of the 12 spies sent to Canaan? **Numbers 14:1-3.** (They complained bitterly against Moses and Aaron and wanted to return to Egypt.)
4. What was Gideon's response to the Midianite occupation of Israel? **Judges 6:13,14.** (He claimed that it was an indication that God was not with His people.)
5. How did John the Baptist show his disappointment with Jesus' ministry? **Matthew 11:2.** (He questioned whether Jesus was the Messiah.)
6. How did the 12 disciples react when Jesus was taken prisoner in Gethsemane? **Matthew 26:56.** (They deserted Him.)
7. How did the apostle show his disappointment with Mark? **Acts 15:36-40.** (He rejected Him as a traveling companion and took Silas instead.)
8. How did Demas show his disappointment with the gospel? **2 Timothy 4:10.** (He deserted the imprisoned Paul.)

Debriefing • Ask: Do you see your situation or that of any modern earliteen reflected in any of the above situations? If so, how can

you learn from the biblical characters?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. How did God use the Great Disappointment to help His people and glorify His name? Where is He when troubles attack us?
2. Can God be trusted with our lives? How can He use negative situations to enrich them?
3. Can He be trusted to do what He says?
4. Will Jesus ever come? How do we know?
5. How did the sanctuary service supply the key to the Great Disappointment?
6. How can earliteens see the sanctuary service as supplying the key to their own disappointments and spiritual questions?
7. In what ways are increasing numbers of earliteens reliving the Great Disappointment in their own lives?
8. In what ways can earliteens use the ex-

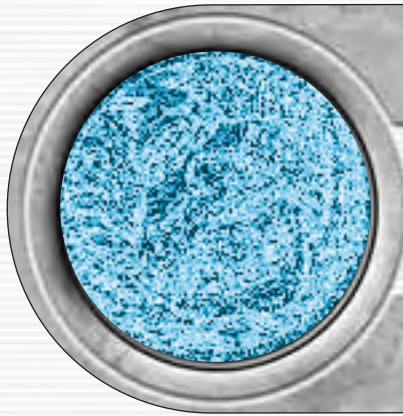
amples of biblical characters to strengthen their faith in God and to encourage their faltering friends?

6 CLOSING

A. SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Disappointment comes into the lives of all. How we deal with it determines whether it serves as a negative tool for our defeat or a positive one for our growth and victory. Whatever the situation, God is ready to use our disappointments for His glory and our ultimate good, just as He did during the Great Disappointment and with Ellen Harmon's life. To ensure this result, we have to trust our entire lives to a God who has only our best interests at heart.



STUDENT LESSON

END-TIME: DISAPPOINTMENT

Where Are You, Lord?

February 5, 2011

>>KEY TEXT: Choose one of the texts from Wednesday's portion of the lesson. Write it here and memorize it this week.



WHERE ARE YOU, LORD?

(What connection do you think the following illustration has with the Bible texts on the other page?)

She felt He would never leave her in her moments of distress. After all, He had proven it throughout her 16 years. Surely, He would not start now in this greatest disappointment of her life.

Tearfully she remembered her first tragedy. She was 9 and hurrying home from school with her twin sister Elizabeth when the fuss started.

"Stop, teacher's pet!" an older schoolmate commanded angrily. "So you think that you're better than the rest of us?"

The twins ignored the girl and picked up speed. They could hear their mother saying, "Never fight anyone. If a child threatens you, head quickly for home!"

"Coward!" the other girl taunted, picking up a stone. Ellen Harmon looked to see how close behind the girl was. As she turned, the girl

flung the stone with all her might, shattering Ellen's nose and plummeting her to the ground in a pool of blood.

Finally reaching home after several fainting spells, Ellen lay in a coma for three weeks. When she emerged, she found her world had changed forever. Her once pretty face was disfigured beyond even her family's recognition. Her friends snubbed her, isolation became her constant companion, and shyness and low self-esteem replaced her cheery disposition.

"But God came through," she told herself. "I sought Him earnestly, and He heard my cry. He showed me that I was of great value and that He loved me." She rubbed the site of her former injury. "Without the accident, I might never have accepted Jesus."

But that was then. What about now?

Today was October 23, the day after Jesus was supposed to return to earth and take her home. Along with other Millerites, she had staked everything on His second coming. Their church had disfellowshipped the Harmons for embracing the "fanatical" doctrine of Jesus' literal advent. They had borne years of taunting for their views, but they figured it would be worth it all. On October 22, Jesus would come and do away with every sin—all pain, disease, division, war, crime, and want!

"Some of us even gave away farms, businesses, and all material possessions," she remembered of the Millerites. "All because we wouldn't need them in heaven."

But Jesus had not come! Had she been deceived? Had God finally left her?

For a long time, she gazed at the eastern sky, as though she could see into heaven itself. Then sighing deeply she declared, "No, God hasn't left Father Miller and the rest of us! We weren't deceived. This year of preparation has been the sweetest of our lives! God has been with us mightily, converting the most hardened sinner hearing our appeal to meet Jesus."

She smiled at the memories. "We've done our duty and lived up to God's Word. He will bring us through this disappointment . . . just as He brought me through my childhood distress!"

She dried her tears and walked purposefully back to the house.



Sunday

HERE'S WHAT I THINK

Imagine your grandmother is a famous Adventist who has served God from childhood. Through the years, God used her to establish many church schools and to help educate scores of needy students. Now she has Alzheimer's, and your grandfather is disappointed that God hasn't healed her. He says that God has deserted them and plans to give up on Him.

What would you tell this man who taught you to love and trust God and His Word? In what ways can God be trusted to bring good out of our bad times? At what age does God stop using us to spread His love?

Log on to www.guidemagazine.org/rtf to post your responses. Be up-front and honest. Say what you think.



Monday

WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO SAY?

Different people, different opinions. Some of the quotations below represent the views of true kingdom citizens; others may not. Can you tell the difference? How do these statements compare with what God is saying in His Word? After reviewing the texts in the God Says . . . portion of the lesson, write a statement that captures your belief. Be prepared to quote yourself at Sabbath School.

>>"No problem is so big or complicated that it can't be run away from!"—*Linus to Charlie Brown.*

>>"It is the wounded oyster that mends its shell with pearl."—*Ralph Waldo Emerson, 19th-century U.S. essayist and poet.*

>>"To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering."—*Roberta Flack, current U.S. pop artist.*

>>"It is wrong always, everywhere and for everyone to believe anything upon insufficient evidence."—*W. K. Clifford, 19th-century British mathematician.*

>>"God will look you over, not for medals or degrees, but for scars."—*Edward Sheldon, 20th-century U.S. dramatist.*

>>"And wilt thou weep when I am low?"—*Lord Byron, 18th-19th-century English poet.*

>>"I will stick to Christ as a burr to a topcoat!"—*Last words of Katherine Von Bora, wife of Martin Luther.*

>>"I'm gonna keep on singin'/I'm gonna keep on shoutin'/I'm gonna keep on lifting my voice/And let the world know that Jesus saves!"—*Andrae Crouch, contemporary Christian musician.*

Write your own quotation.

WHAT I SAY IS . . .



Tuesday

SO WHAT?

The twin subjects of the Great Disappointment and the Heavenly Sanctuary are important because they really address the age-old questions of whether God can be trusted, whether He cares for us, and whether He has a solution for the problem of sin.

Millerites staked everything on Jesus' promise that He would return to earth, bring sin and suffering to an end, and take His followers home to heaven. They mistakenly concluded that the earth was the sanctuary to be cleansed by the fires of His second coming on October 22, 1844, the end of the 2300 days prophecy. Jesus patiently showed them that the heavenly sanctuary was cleansed of sin instead and that His coming was indeed near. He gave them the comfort and light they needed for their disappointment and their critics.

Early Adventists took courage from the details of the sanctuary service. In it, they saw Jesus as the Great High Priest who was touched by their deficiencies and lived to make intercession for them. His primary focus was to forgive their sins and develop His characteristics in them. Moreover, He assured them that sin would not exist forever, using the symbols of the Old Testament sanctuary service to illustrate this fact.

Some Millerites took heart from this new revelation unlocking the Great Disappointment and pressed on to become Seventh-day Adventists. The good news of the sanctuary became their unique contribution to Christianity.



Wednesday

GOD SAYS . . .

>>John 14:3 (NIV)

"I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

>>Habakkuk 2:3 (NIV)

"For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay."

>>Hebrews 10:35 (NIV)

"So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded."

>>Titus 1:2 (NIV)

". . . a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie,

promised before the beginning of time."

>>2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

>>Matthew 10:30 (NIV)

"And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

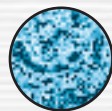
>>Psalm 77:13 (KJV)

"Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary."

>>Revelation 21: 3, 4 (NIV)

"Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them . . . and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

(More: 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 2 Peter 3:9, 10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Revelation 21:3, 4.)



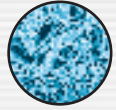
Thursday

**WHAT DOES THIS
HAVE TO DO WITH ME?**

Although you're an earliteen, you've probably been affected by one of the following situations: Divorces or firings. Deaths or defeats. Oppression or injustice. Diseases or accidents. And the list of human calamities could go on and on. Perhaps you've asked, "Where's God in all of this?" Maybe you sometimes wonder whether He cares about you and whether the long night of sin will ever end.

The good news of the sanctuary is that God does care about you and the havoc sin has made of His planet. He sent His Son not just to sound the death knell of Satan, the source of sin, but also to personally take your sin upon Him so that you won't suffer the second death. Furthermore, He freely offers you His perfect life—to be claimed any time by faith. He mercifully delays His second coming for everyone to accept this unbelievable bargain.

Accepting it blots out the past and ensures the future, but it also enriches our present, for Jesus is concerned about our entire lives. He doesn't destroy all forms of sin now, but He gives us the power to cope with them. In fact, He makes them agents of good instead of evil.



Friday

HOW DOES IT WORK?

God wants us to know that He's caring and trustworthy. He encourages our curiosity and welcomes our efforts to test Him. "Come now, let us reason together," He invites us in **Isaiah 1:18 (NIV)**. "Test me," he encourages us in **Malachi 3:10 (NIV)**. With this in mind, use the

following chart to determine His compassion, trustworthiness, and effectiveness.

In the first column, list three or four problems from the What Does This Have to Do with Me? section. Next, find three or four members of your local church who've experienced them and wouldn't mind talking generally about them. Then ask, "Did God care about you in this experience? How do you know if He cared or not? How has the experience affected your relationship with Him?" Record the responses you get from the interviews anonymously in the second column. In the last column, record your own conclusions about God, based on what you've observed in the interviews.

Problem	How Member Felt God Responded to the Problem	My Conclusions About God
1. _____	1. _____ _____ _____ _____	1. _____ _____ _____ _____
2. _____	2. _____ _____ _____ _____	2. _____ _____ _____ _____
3. _____	3. _____ _____ _____ _____	3. _____ _____ _____ _____
4. _____	4. _____ _____ _____ _____	4. _____ _____ _____ _____



